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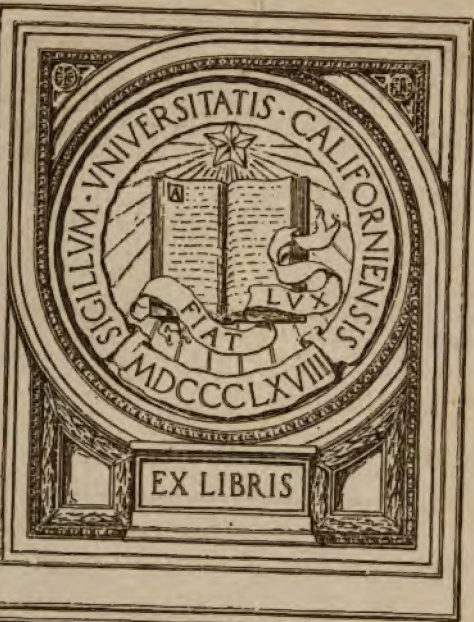


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A
RED-LETTER
DAY

LUCIUS HARWOOD FOOTE





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FRED M. DEWITT
BOOKSELLER
680 FOURTEENTH ST.

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To Charles G. Yale Esq
with the compliments of
Maurice H. Folsom

San Francisco
Jan 9th 1891

A

RED-LETTER DAY

AND OTHER POEMS

DAY OF
CALIFORNIA

BY

LUCIUS HARWOOD FOOTE

//



BOSTON

A. WILLIAMS AND COMPANY

283 WASHINGTON STREET

1882

TO THE
ABORIGINAL

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A RED-LETTER DAY.



AN hour of toil and strife, and we are dead.

Life is a lie, a bitter lie, I said,

And death itself is only dust to dust.

All men are mad indeed with venal lust,

The toiling galley slaves of cent per cent

There is no cure, alas! for all these ills.

In such a mood I folded up my tent

In sooth, and sought the freedom of the hills.

And from the couch of pine boughs where I
lie, —

As one by one the dark-winged shadows fly, —

I watch the birth of this auspicious day.

There is a quickening in the womb of night,

A fringe of dawn, and then a flush of light ;

Slowly the sable curtain rolls away :

Let there be light, as God himself ordains,

A beacon lit by his divine decree,

Sign manual that law and order reigns.
No fringe of foam to fleck the sapphire sea,
Full-orbed the prince of light and life is
born ;

His royal banners flush the eastern skies,
I shake the spell of slumber from my eyes,
And hie me forth elate to meet the morn.
And lo ! from peak to peak, on either hand,
The new-born daylight ripples o'er the land.

All hail, Aurora, herald of the sun !
As o'er the peaks thy coursers dash apace,
Behold, the pale-faced stars die one by one,
And earth, awaking from the cool embrace
Of night, reveals to us her rosy face.

Although the impress of repose remains,
The seal of sleep is broken ; to the ear
Come palpitating waves of sound ; I hear
The life-tide ebb and flow in nature's veins,
Tones inarticulate, the stir of wings,
The mellow murmur of earth's viewless springs.

An amber halo glorifies the hills,
And as the owl on muffled wing retires,

One half-awakened minstrel lightly trills
An overture for all the sleeping choirs.
The countless choristers will join, ere long,
In one exultant avalanche of song.

Come forth, O weary denizen of town,
Bathe in the sunshine, breathe the balmy air,
Shake off the toils of traffic, and lay down
The life-long burden which you seem to bear.
Wait not for death to break thy prison bars,
And send thy ransomed soul to paradise ;
But seek betimes the free, glad life beneath the
stars.

For thee the gods have spread a rich repast ;
Ambrosia falls like manna from the skies,
And nectar flows in every wayside rill.
Come forth, and break, for once, thy life-long
fast,
And from this gracious bounty take thy fill.

With eager step I climb the ridge to seek
A highland glade beneath the purple peak.

There all the shining day, from dawn till
dark,

The wary birds beneath the covert hide.

Meanwhile my dogs exult, with bound and
bark,

And beat the tangled brake from side to side.

Borne onward by the day's advancing light,
The waves of warmth roll down the rocky
height.

And long before the ardent sun has kissed

The humid lowlands with his earliest beam,

I catch the gleam and sparkle of the stream,
Between the fading folds of silver mist.

From nook and nest, when full-fledged day is
born,

What swarms of life come forth to greet the
morn!

The drowsy hum of the bee is heard,

And the locust's clanging cry,

And a flashing gem, in the form of a bird,

On its jeweled wings darts by.

The linnet sings in the lowly hedge,
And the raven croaks above ;
The lizard basks on the crannied ledge,
And the hawk swoops down on the dove.
The dragon-fly like a fiend is seen,
Poised in mid-air on his gauze-like wings ;
And beetles, and moths in gold and green,
And wasps with their shining rings.
Spiders are weaving their filmy snares,
And bees are hoarding their honeyed stores,
While emmets, busy with household cares,
Trail over the forest floors.
Butterflies creep from the silken pall
In the tomb where the chrysalis dies,
And through brooding leaves the sunbeams
fall,
And luminous columns of light arise.
In these shafts of light, from morn till night,
The midges reel in their amorous flight.
The marmots chatter, the magpies scold,
And quails are piping along the slopes ;

And, down in the heart of the dusky wold,
The owl sits alone in his crypt, and mopes.

Through the reedy marsh the bitterns wade,
And along the marge the herons stalk;
The rabbit scurries across the glade,
And over the cañon wheels the hawk.

I skirt along the mountain's bosky flank,
And find primeval parks of pines and firs —
Between the shoulders of projecting spurs
These lordly cones are marshaled rank on
rank.

In the ambrosial gloom, dark aisles of pines
Lead out to sunny glades, and laughing water-
ways.

Where moss-enameled trunks and trailing
vines

Hedge in the bud and bloom of vernal days.

Down the cool distance of the long arcade
The white azalea's snow-flakes fleck the way;
And in the shelter of the fostering shade,
I pluck one hooded violet of May.

The fragrance of the flower-embroidered
mead

Fills all the dreamy air with fresh delight.

Undaunted, from some far sequestered height

The doe leads here her spotted fawns to feed;

And here the bee and bird and butterfly

Find spread for them a floral feast on high.

Borne on the tides of air, now faint, now
clear,

The roar of waters breaks upon my ear.

A shower of brooknotes floods the perfect day.

Where sun-rays pierce the meshes of the
mist,

An arch of splendor spans the falling spray.

Haply some Naiad haunts the stream; I list

The sibylistic whisper of the leaves;

A Faun seems grieving when the fir-tree
grieves,

And in the pine's pathetic monotone

Methinks I hear the sad-voiced Ariel moan.

Drenched by the rain of ceaseless waterfalls,

Moist-footed mosses scale the dripping walls.

Here, wary of the angler's tempting hook,
The lithe and spotted leopard of the brook
Lurks for his prey in every shaded nook.
With ruffled crest, and sharp, discordant cries,
The feathered fisher flits from limb to limb.
Into the seething foam the ouzel flies,
Above the troubled pool the swallows skim.
This is the gateway, — and on either hand
The fragments of colossal cliffs. I climb
From rock to rock, until at last, I stand
Upon the ragged battlements of time.
The earth's historian is death ; and here,
From age to age, are stamped the records of
the past.
Man and his handiwork may disappear
But these shall last as long as time shall last.
In the archaic years, the glacier's fangs
Laid bare these granite ribs, and ground to
dust
The concrete layers of the lava crust.
Rents, riven by the earthquake, mark the pangs
Of nature, and reveal to us the throes

Of earth. These rounded domes, these cloud-
capt spires,

Congeaed and moulded into grand repose,
Bespeak the fury of volcanic fires.

Down the long pathway of the ages, time
Has wrought with magic touch, transmuting all

The fearful splendors of creation's prime.
And as the æons rolled away, the pall

Was lifted from the sea and land, and life
Was born of death, the elemental strife
Was hushed, the Voice Divine was heard, peace
reigned,

And beauty blossomed in the earth. Ordained
By some fixed law, the seasons come and go,
The wind-sown seeds in desert places sleep,

Until the sunbeams kiss the dust, when lo!
The hidden germs are stirred, the heavens
weep,

And life triumphant springs from last year's
tomb.

Into the crannied rocks the lichens creep,
Along the crater's rim the roses bloom.



The streams, from winter's icy chain set free,
And fed by falling rain and melting snow,
Rush down the ice-worn water-ways, and flow
In melted music to the summer sea.

Within the mountain's lap enshrined,
And where the falling waters wake
A thousand echoes from the cliffs, I find
A rock-imprisoned lake.

Locked in a glacier's tomb, it lies asleep,
Belted by firs, and fringed with water-plants.
Upon its shining disk the sunbeams dance,
And from its polished lip the rapids leap.
Seen through the waters' cool eclipse, behold,
Suspended in its calm, unruffled breast,
The hanging outlines of the dusky wold,
And the inverted headlands of the crest!
Lured by the wild seclusion of the place,
Its savage grandeur, and its tender grace;
Lulled by the ripple of the wind and tide,
The incense, and the song of birds, I bide
A blissful moment; and as I depart
I turn from thee, O tranquil lake! and hide
A picture and a poem in my heart.

Three hours, at least, since dawn, and here we
are,—

Ten miles o'er mount and moor, as flies the
crow.

The skulking covey now is near at hand.
My dogs have snuffed the battle from afar ;
How quick they catch the scent, how stanch
they stand !

Steady, my faithful Bess — down — down
there, Joe !

And even as I speak, the grey cock springs,
Bursts through the tangled brake, with whirl of
wings,

And drops, dead bird, upon the heath below
Once more, my mottled beauties, left and right,
Two well-directed shots have stopped your
flight.

The heart does penance, but the hand will
kill.

Good dog, — dead bird, — go seek, — dead bird,
I say.

By Jove, another, and — another still ;

Steady, my braves, there 's gallant sport to-day.

And so, on rapid wings, the hours go by ;

I little heed the moments as they fly.

The covert we have beaten, o'er and o'er,

Have flushed a score of birds, at least, and
more,

High noon is blazing on the purple crest ;

Call in the panting dogs, I fain would rest.

The fevered land lies throbbing in the heat,

And I will seek some quiet cloister shade,

Some leafy mosque, with arabesque inlaid.

'T is but a step to yonder still retreat,

Where screens of silken canopies invite

To cool siestas in the chastened light.

There are no frowning gates to bar the way,

I hear no warder's challenge, as I pass ;

Latticed with leaves, and carpeted with grass

Its sylvan doors are open to the day.

I cross the threshold of this leaf-lined nest,

And find myself at once a welcome guest.

No host receives me with a smiling face,

But rare civilities have no surcease.
I am the sole possessor of the place,
To break my bread and drink my wine in
peace.

My dogs beside me, couched upon the sward,
I sit me down to lunch, like any lord.

There is no sauce like appetite, I ween :
And I have dined and wined enough to be
aware

That brimming cups, and lengthy bills of fare,
Will not disperse the vapors of the spleen.
The key to Paradise is not a cork,

For men have tried it often since the fall.
A man may dine without a silver fork,
May dine right well without a fork at all.

In fact, I find, for all our pampered ills,
There is no cure like tent-life on the hills.

There we obey the mandate, " Kill and eat,"
Because no meagre diet will suffice,
When health and hunger by the camp-fire
meet.

First, from the hanging haunch a tender slice

Broiled on the glowing embers to a turn,
And then, impaled where blazing fagots burn,
A bird or two, by timely shot brought down,
Larded with bits of bacon, crisp and brown.

What if the fare be plain, the service crude,
We have a wealth of appetite at least,
And last of all, to cheer the solitude,
A cup of camp-brewed coffee, amber-hued,
Which is the crowning glory of the feast !

And then — at night, the song, the laugh, the
jest,

The camp-fire tales related with a zest :
How in the jungle some one chanced to meet
The shaggy monster, with the shuffling feet,
And how discretion sought a safe retreat.

Hard by the stream, beside the antlered oak,
The wolf, beneath my waistcoat, fast asleep,
From my post-prandial pipe the coils of smoke
Unwind, and vanish in the upper deep.
Unmindful of the pendent sword, mayhap,
In dreamy lassitude, at ease I lie

Upon the moorland's aromatic lap,
And scan the vast abyss of shoreless sky.
Away, upon the outmost verge of sight,
The livelong day, at that far height,
An eagle, resting on his wings,
Wheels round and round in circling rings.
In pensive mood, I turn my half-closed eyes
Across the hazy lowlands, leagues away,
Where dim ethereal ramparts, vast and gray,
Rise, Alps on Alps, against the vaulted skies.
I mark the splendid sweep of plain below,
The miles on miles of undulating hills,
The darker gorges of the upland rills,
The sinuous curves where tree-fringed rivers
flow.
Mid-summer days have tanned the valley's hide,
And draped the mountain's corrugated side
In dappled robes of gold and green and dun.
Where heat-waves wimple in the noonday
sun,
White farmsteads nestle under brooding trees,
And gleam like white sails on the wrinkled
seas.

Stout-hearted nomads, from far distant lands,
Have pitched their tents, and lit their camp-
fires here ;

And though the thirsty fields are brown and
sere,

An ample harvest waits on willing hands.
In all methinks I see the counterpart
Of Italy, without her dower of art.
We have the lordly Alps, the fir-fringed hills,
The green and golden valleys veined with rills,
A dead Vesuvius with its smouldering fire,
A tawny Tiber sweeping to the sea.
Our seasons have the same superb attire,
The same redundant wealth of flower and
tree,

Upon our peaks the same imperial dyes,
And day by day, serenely over all,
The same successive months of smiling skies.

Conceive a cross, a tower, a convent wall,
A broken column and a fallen fane,
A chain of crumbling arches down the plain,
A group of brown-faced children by a stream,

A scarlet-skirted maiden, standing near,
A monk, a beggar, and a muleteer,
And lo, it is no longer now a dream.
These are the Alps, and there the Apennines;
The fertile plains of Lombardy between;
Beyond, Val d'Arno with its flocks and vines,
These granite crags are gray monastic shrines
Perched on the cliffs like old dismantled forts;
And far to seaward can be dimly seen
The marble splendor of Venetian courts;
While one can all but hear the mournful rhyth-
mic beat
Of white-lipped waves along the sea-paved
street.

O childless mother of dead empires, we,
The latest born of all the western lands,
In fancied kinship stretch our infant hands
Across the intervening seas to thee.
Thine the immortal twilight, ours the dawn,
Yet we shall have our names to canonize,
Our past to haunt us with its solemn eyes,
Our ruins, when this restless age is gone.



Time was, whene'er the ardent sun rode by,
May blushed the while, and breathed a fragrant
sigh.

Then came the passion of imperial June,
As morn is followed by the fervid noon,
And then the tawny splendor of July.

Metallic lustres brighten as the summer
wanes,

The sky itself is like a sea of glass,

The snow-fed streams are links of silver
chains,

The rounded hills are waves of molten brass.

Where erst the earth was clad in rainbow
hues,

And gilded insects wrapped themselves in fire,
Now Flora dies upon her kindled pyre,

And all the pageantry of death ensues.

In the still half-light of the nearer shade,

Where sunbeams filter through the leaves,
behold!

The summer's pall, the autumn's masquerade,

The dead year's cast-off garments turned to
gold.

Here I escape the world's discordant noise,
The broken middle-sleeps that bring no rest;
No palms appeal to me, no toilsome quest
For wealth or fame; in blissful equipoise,
I lie content on nature's tranquil breast.
The calm repose of perfect peace abounds.
I hear the breeze coquetting with the trees,
The hum of myriad wings, the drone of bees,
And fill my heart with these delightful sounds.
Lulled by the woodland's weird æolian lyre,
And the delicious babble of the streams,
I fold my listless hands, and dream my dreams,
Unvexed by doubt, unruffled by desire.
No longer worldly wise, I hold a sweet
Communion with the bee and bird and
flower.
Speech fails and falters, when I would repeat
The wondrous harmonies of this glad hour.
I know, and only know, that as I kneel
In silent ecstasy upon the sod,
I listen with my inmost soul, and feel
No discords in the orchestras of God.

Content to see the year grow old and gray,
I quaff the wine of this mid-summer day.

Spring's oriflamme is withered to a weed,
The waves of green have spilled their crests of
foam,

The pink-lined shells of May have gone to
seed,

The squirrel hoards against the hour of
need,

And celebrates betimes his harvest home.

Already twilight lurks within the wold,
So swift the hours have flown on silken
wings;

The waning daylight sows its dust of gold,
And on the crest a fitful splendor flings.

As rapid hours complete the ripened day,
The new moon's sickle reaps the yellow sheaf.

Whate'er betide of good or ill, always
My book of life has one illumined leaf.

ON THE HEIGHTS.

“The rock fell under us in one sheer sweep, thirty-two hundred feet.”

HE crawls along the mountain walls,
From whence the severed river falls ;
Its seething waters writhe and twist,
Then leap, and crumble into mist.
Midway between two boundless seas,
Prone on a ragged reef he lies ;
Above him bend the shoreless skies,
While helpless on his bended knees
Into that awful gulf, profound,
Appalled, he peers with bated breath,
Clutches with fear the yielding ground,
And crouches face to face with death.
The fearful splendor of the sight
Begets in his bewildered brain
A downright torture of delight,
The very ecstasy of pain.

A subtle frenzy fills his mind,
If he could break the bonds that bind,
And float upon the waves of air,
In passive, listless ease could glide,
Devoid of hope, devoid of care,
Down the cool currents of the tide ;
Or like a white-winged cloud could sleep
Forever on the crystal deep,
To rise and fall with every breath, —
If this were death, then welcome death.
With eyes upturned, he breaks the spell,
And creeps from out the jaws of hell.
Pohono's siren wiles beguile —
He drinks her kisses in the wind,
He leaves the nether world behind ;
Up, and still upward, mile on mile,
With muffled tramp, the pilgrim creeps
Across the frozen winding-sheet,
Where white-faced death in silence sleeps.
Up, and still upward, to the light,
Until at last his leaden feet
Have mocked the eagle in its flight.

Grim-browed and bald, Tis-sa-ack broods
Above these white-robed solitudes.
A mute, awe-stricken mortal stands
Upon the fragment of a world,
And, when the rifted clouds are curled,
Sees far below the wrinkled lands.

MARIE.

It chanced that I, in years gone by,
Sought out one day, I scarce know why,
 The market of Aubette ;
And I saw there a maiden fair,
With midnight eyes and golden hair,
 And fate and I had met. .

I went again somehow, and then
I often went ; for when, oh when,
 Will heedless youth beware ?
The sweet surprise within her eyes,
As when the morn lights up the skies,
 Allured me unaware.

Her timid glance did so entrance,
That I, beguiled thereby perchance,
 Deemed it a mere caprice ;
Ah well-a-day ! how quickly may

We fritter golden hours away,
Which promise joy and peace.

An attic high, against the sky, —
Affaire d'amour — a fragile tie —
Two swallows neath the eaves;
One hour ago I sought, and lo!
No birds were there; the one, I know
Has gone, the other grieves.

Dear lost Marie! I would not see
The heaven of love in store for me,
But turned with pride away;
So now I weep, and sadly keep
My mournful vigils o'er the sleep
Of her I spurned that day.

Could I forget, I would; and yet
Remorse is keener than regret,
Requiting pain with pain;
And when the bells ring solemn knells,
I hither bring sweet *immortelles*;
Dead birds come not again.

THEN AND NOW.

I.

A VAULTED roof, a columned nave,
An oriel window whence the light
Gilds fretted arch and architrave,
As moonlight gilds the night.
The old, old story of the heart ;
Beside the chancel, hand in hand,
A ring, a vow "till death do part,"
Two wedded lovers stand.

II.

A cold, dark sky, a darker sea,
A foaming fringe of breaking surf;
Beside a gnarled and leafless tree,
A patch of tender turf.
A woman kneeling on the sands,
Two white lips parted as in prayer,
A Niobe with outstretched hands
Wrestling with fell despair.

A MONOGRAPH.

ANNO DOMINI eighteen thirty-one,
In the third year of wedlock, there was born,
To John and Josephine, an only son.
Thus much was written on his birth-day morn.
Swathed, nursed, and christened, as befits the
 heir

Of honest yeomen, he waxed stout and fair,
Until at length, well grown, he quit the fold.
A few strong headlines, and the rest is told.

A mother's hopes, a mother's fears,
A school-boy's triumphs and his tears,
A dear girl's love, a stolen kiss,
A mutual vow, for good or ill,
A year or more of wedded bliss,
A new-made grave beyond the hill.
The bitter pang, the life-long pain,
The transient pleasures of an hour,
The shifting tides of loss and gain,

The bootless strife for place and power.
He joined the ranks where brave men fell,
He saw the battle's lurid glare,
He heard the scream of shot and shell,
The rolling drums, the trumpet's blare.
Amid the windrows of the dead
I knelt to-day beside his bed.
He died as men have died before,
A spent wave on a barren shore.
We storm the fortress, and we fail.
We dream of eagle-flights, and fall.
I have writ down an o'er-true tale.
Alas ! God help us,—that is all.

WHO KNOWS?

CONFRONTED from within and from without,
By vague, uncertain questions that arise;
Condemned if only we presume to doubt
The dogmatists whom mortals canonize.

Must we without complaint, deceived, undone,
Cold-eyed and calm, accept the cruel fate
Which robs us of our treasures one by one,
And still unsated leaves us desolate?

Must we conceal our motives from the world
And sacrifice our candor to our fears?
And while the heart is crushed must lips be
curled, —
A frozen sneer above a sea of tears?

Must face and voice — by subtle sense or sight,
Which we have somewhere seen or heard
before —

With strange perverseness haunt us day and
night,

The fabled skeleton behind the door?

Prometheus-like, must we with hopeless sighs,
Chained and dejected, pace the weary round,
Seeking with hungered hearts and eager eyes
The something longed for, and yet never
found?

Will no fruition come with calm repose,
When Death rings down the curtain to the
play?

By His harmonious law and love — who
knows? —

Perchance the problem may be solved some
day.

DRIFTING.

ACROSS San Pablo's heaving breast
I see the home-lights gleam,
As the sable garments of the night
Drop down on vale and stream.

The daylight on his royal couch
In crimson glory dies,
While northward, on belated wing,
The sad-voiced bittern flies.

For miles — from where yon rounded hills
Darken the southern sky —
I hear the bells of browsing kine,
And catch the herder's cry.

Just where the silver of the moon
Falls on the shimmering tide,
Marking that line of light, I see
Twin islands side by side.

Hard by, yon vessel from the seas
Her cargo homeward brings,
And soon, like sea-bird on her nest,
Will sleep with folded wings.

The fisher's boat swings in the bay,
From yonder point below,
While ours is drifting with the tide,
And rocking to and fro ;

Carelessly rocking to and fro,
As shifts the fitful stream ;
Two Nimrods dreaming as we drift
And sketching as we dream.

MY ORIENT.

SPELL-BOUND beside the languid stream,
Breathing the lotus balms,
I lie amid the ferns, and dream
Of oriental palms.

Where now, with most ungainly strides,
The lazy heron feeds,
Methinks the sacred ibis hides
Among the river reeds.

The sunbeam's golden arrows fall
About me in the grass;
I hear the midges' bugle-call
To combat, as they pass.

I see the emmets' pyramid,
And watch their caravans,
Like camels on the march amid
Sahara's desert sands.

One horseman dashes o'er the plain,
One stands beside the gate ;
Al Hassan seeks the camel train,
While Mahmoud lies in wait.

An aged sheik, with wrinkled brows,
Sits in the evening sun,
And gathers dates from oaken boughs,
As I perhaps have done.

The silent twilight hour draws near,
The crescent gleams in air,
And I, expectant, wait to hear
Muezzin's call to prayer.

EL RIO SACRAMENTO.

WHERE ice-clad summits greet the morn,
And where the beetling crags look down
On dark blue lakes with sullen frown,
This bantling of the clouds is born.
Forth from its granite cradle creeps,
At first in play it laughs and leaps,
And then in dusky pools it sleeps.
Down silent, sunless glens it glides,
And under long sedge grasses hides,
Where aspen leaves, like quivering wings,
Quaver above its hidden springs.

Anon, in silver-sheeted falls
It leaps the terraced mountain walls,
And tumbles into rocky urns,
Beflecked with foam and fringed with
ferns.

At last this half-grown infant^{*}, fed
By melting snow and falling rain,
Like bruin chafing with his chain,
Growls hoarsely in its granite bed,
And plows its pathway to the plain.
Meanwhile, by some designing will
Harnessed and schooled, it turns the mill,
And with its ponderous sledge unlocks
The concrete coffers of the rocks.

In middle summer, lank and lean,
It creeps the shelving banks between ;
And then in spring and autumn tide,
Crimson with carnage, flushed with pride,
In serried ranks of gleaming pikes
It dashes on the yielding dikes,
And breaks the ramparts, rushing down
Upon defenseless farm and town.

In tamer moods content to hold
By croft and thorp, by field and fold,
Past orchard boughs and bending grain,

Past grazing herds and loaded wain,
Past children, laughing at their play,
The devious tenor of its way.

In ceaseless, silent sweep, between
Low-lying meadows, rank and green,
Along the marge of bastioned banks,
Its dimpled face reflects the ranks
Of gray-beard oaks ; its liquid kiss
Thrills all the river reeds with bliss.
The thirsty fibrils of the vine
Reach down to quaff its amber wine ;
The grasses and the willows lave
Their tangled tresses in its wave.
The silver thread has grown to be
A molten avalanche set free.—
Its path the highway of the world,
Where sails of commerce are unfurled,
Emblem of Time's resistless tide,
On, and still on, its currents glide,
Until, at length, far, far below,
It wedds the sea with stately flow.

MA PAUVRE PETITE.

THE lamps glow within, the storm raves without ;

I sit at mine ease in the softened light,
And think of Ginevra. She seemed so devout,

I wonder if ever the shade of a doubt
Crossed the mind of her lord ere that night.

I look at the bubbles that dance and swim
On the amber wine, like an elfin band,
And I dream of the past, while my eyes grow dim,

As I carelessly kiss with my lips the rim
Of the antique glass in my hand.

A rustle of garments, a step in the hall,
And my princess comes in her queenly grace ;

The grim Rembrandt smiles in his frame on
the wall,
When those fairy feet on the carpet fall,
As she takes by my side her place.

I am dreaming, perchance, yet I know she is
there ;
On my forehead I feel for a moment her
kiss ;
A subtle something is in the air,
An olive face with its dark brown hair —
But 't is folly to speak of all this.

She chats in her charming womanly way,
And I listen, or seem to listen, the while ;
Somehow vaguely at length I hear her say,
“ A bit of romance, or the plot of a play,
If only one blithe, bonny bird to beguile.”

A story you ask for? well, so let it be ;
Let me think — twenty years have gone by
to a day.

How swiftly the summers have flown since we,
Two lads, in that quaint old town by the sea,
Idled and trifled the summer away.

We were scarcely nineteen — how the holidays
flew!

Two naval cadets, off duty, on shore ;
We did, I suppose, just as most middies do,
Squandered our pay in a mad lark or two,
Then starved for a month to make up the
score.

Tom was my hero — I thought him divine ;
He 's an admiral now — won his stars at Mo-
bile ;
The veriest old sea-dog, they say, in the line —
Washes his face every morning in brine,
And swears that he 'll have on his coffin a
keel.

We lodged in an attic just off from the park —
In a mocking mood we called it a den ;

If I rightly remember the square is St. Mark,
Houses on either side dingy and dark ;
We would smile at it now — it suited us then.

For a neighbor we had — it is strange, I declare,
I can see him now in his singular guise —
A French *émigré*, with his silver hair,
And his broken speech, and *port militaire*,
And his wan little girl with her hungry eyes.

Once or twice only we met on the street ;
All further advances seemed somehow in
vain,
But morning and night we heard him repeat,
“ *Ma pauvre petite, ma pauvre petite,*”
Till our own hearts caught up the refrain.

Said Tom, in his old, impetuous way,
“ Let ’s give them a sail in the yacht, my boy,
For the wind is a trifle fresh to-day,
And who knows, poor things, but a taste of salt
spray
Might change all their sorrow to joy.”

In less than an hour, with eight or ten more,
 We had them on board of our staunch little
 craft;
The sails were all set, we standing off shore,
While the spray from the white-caps was flying
 before,
And the wind followed hard abaft.

Just how it all happened, we never could
 tell;
 The child leaned on the rail by her grand-
 papa's side;
Our weather-bow must have been caught by
 the swell,
For there came a lurch, and a cry, and she
 fell —
And something white floated off on the tide.

Tom held the helm; in an instant he swung
 And brought her to in the eye of the
 gale;
Two men were over, one old and one young.

But young arms are lusty, not likely to fail —
And how does my blithe, bonny bird like the
tale ?

What! You wish to hear more of the old
émigré ?

Not satisfied yet? — it seems incomplete ?
Well, look in my eyes. Don't you see, *chère*
amie,

I — I was the lad who leaped into the sea,
And you — you were "*ma pauvre petite*."

“TINS TO MEND.”

“TINS to mend!” How he swings along,
That curious man with his tattered clothes,
And his swarthy face, and his crooked nose,
And that nasal chant wherever he goes,
Quaint burlesque of a song.

The vagrant life he leads, who knows?
Through the highways and byways, out and in
Searching early and late for worn-out tin;
The housemaid declares that he smells of gin —
He don't seem like a rose.

As I watched him that autumn day,
I marveled if perchance some biting scorn,
Or a blighted hope, or a life forlorn,
Had not changed the gold of his early morn
Into an ashen gray.

And where fell first his childhood's glance —
Whether by Vineland's hilled and castled
stream,
Or where the Bosphor's storied waters
gleam,
Or Adriatic's thousand islands seem
The haunts of old romance.

"Tins to mend!" was the weird refrain
Which fell on my ear as I strolled along,
Farther and farther from the city's throng,
Till by an humble cot he ceased his song,
From toil set free again.

The door ajar, I saw him kissed;
A little child, with sweet, endearing cry,
Sprang to his arms, love beaming from her
eye;
Mine own were somehow wet — I can't tell
why —
It might have been the mist.

The good God keeps us in his sight —
Sure, if in pleasant paths our footsteps fall,
Or if our dead hopes lie beneath the pall,
That joy and sorrow come alike to all,
That morn succeeds the night.

VIGNETTES.

I.

I HAVE, somewhere, the sketch of a cottage
home,

With the sunlight flooding the humble room,
While the south wind tosses the mottled foam
Of the orchard boughs in their bloom.

Under trailing roses a maiden stands,
Demurely sweet in her simple guise,
A quiet grace in her folded hands,
And a world of faith in her eyes.

She dreams the dear dreams of youth and of
hope,
Of a knight who is coming from over the
sea —

Of a fairy castle on wooded slope,
Of the lover that is to be.

II.

With suitors in waiting on either hand,
 She watches the tide as it ebbs and flows ;
Minerva in marble is not more grand
 Than is she in her cool repose.

Her make-up, a marvel of pink and of pearl ;
 Self-poised, she turns in her conscious
 grace —
From the braided coils of her hair a curl
 Falls over the billows of lace.

Or she sits at her ease and calmly smiles,—
 Her lord has been dead for a year and a
 day,—
Weaving the web of her well-bred wiles
 In a nonchalant, listless way.

ENVOI.

Time is a worker of wonders : I knew
 Both the artless maid and the stately dame ;
And strange indeed, as it seems, the two
 Were verily one and the same.

NEITHER DO I CONDEMN.

I've sent for you, Will. I know you won't mind.
You were always so silent and good —
When others were rude and unkind,
You alone understood.

Please bring your chair here, Will, close to my
side.

There — lift my head. I've something to
say.

Oh, I thought last night I'd have died!
How I longed for the day!

Well again soon — do you think? Alas! no.

This pain at my heart like a knife —
But it matters not when I go
Out of this weary life.

Now, promise me, Will, to do what I ask;
And bend down while I whisper my name.

For women like me wear a mask
To cover and hide their shame.

There's a little brown house on the hillside,
And a white-haired old man left alone —
Oh, Will, if you knew how I've tried
All these years to atone.

Here's a package, a letter, and something
more :
A lock of my hair—don't think it a whim.
Send them, dear Will, when all is o'er,
With a kind word, to him.

Conceal from him all of my wickedness ;
Say that my heart ran over with love —
That I died, praying God to bless
And unite us above.

Perhaps the dear God will forgive the sin
For the sake of His Son crucified,
And permit me to enter in,
Pardoned and purified.

Back of the town—on the slope, to the west—
Is a little grave. What! tears in your
eyes!

Lay me there by her side to rest—
There where my baby lies.

O God! This pain—it is coming. Hark!
I shall die—don't leave me. Stay, Will,
stay!

I'm going—your promise—so dark—
Pray for me, Will, oh, pray!

Dead. Let not the living adjudge the dead.—
Unworthy to touch His garment's hem;
Remember the Master hath said,
“Neither do I condemn.”

AN OFT TOLD TALE.

I RECOLLECT one certain night in June
(It seems to me our nights are dearer than
our days)

When dust of silver from the moon
(As some familiar poet says)
Fell softly on the sea and land.

It was the night of nights ; pray tell what
harm

For youth and beauty, arm in arm,
To saunter down the yellow sand ?
I quite forget just how it came about ;
There was an earnest word, two hands held
out,

And then upon his breast
In momentary rest,
The mobile mouth and tender eyes
Were turned to him in glad surprise.
It was so very, very nice, you know,

To press her seaside hat against his vest,
A sweet foretaste of heaven, although
The rest was only momentary rest ;
For with remorseful start she said,
 “ Alas ! Alas ! for me,
 It cannot, cannot be,
To-morrow week I am to wed.”
How small a word will grind the heart to dust ;
 A breath of air will break the thread
On which we hang our trust.
 And while his lips were white and mute,
 He took from her the Dead Sea fruit,
 And simply bowed his head.
An oft told tale ; it was the wealth
Of youth, and hope, and matchless health ;
It was the opulence of brawny arms
Against five-twenties and a hundred farms.
 Back to his dull, unconscious books
He went, with bruised heart and sharpened
 brain,
 To school his thoughts, and mask his looks,
And nurse a purpose born of pain.

A trifle cynical he seems, and yet

He may, perhaps, forget.

“Hard hit,” Sir *Blasé* says in well bred slang ;

He sees the symptoms and has felt the
pang.

Brave hearts will sometimes wince, he
knows ;

Will wince, and still not whine,

If once there is no color to the rose,

No sparkle to the wine.

And she, she plays her wedded part

Right royally, with subtle art,

And wears with pride her gilded chain ;

But for the semblance of a heart

We seek in vain.

The man whose name she bears

Is old, and gray, and bent with cares ;

But then, but then,

He is the prince of men,

For she is mistress of the Riverside,

And has a brown stone front in town be-
side.

Time brings reprisals to us all,
And soon or late we learn the truth,
That stately pride will have its fall ;
And that one little heart, forsooth,
Outweighs it all.

AT LAST AT REST.

A woman, worn and wan, lay dying
At a rude wayside inn;
Winter's dead leaves without were flying,
Dead hopes within.

No wet-eyed mourners took their places
Beside the bed of death,
Or watched with sad, averted faces
And bated breath.

Alone, uncared for, and untended,
Unshriven and unblessed —
A wayward, stormy life was ended,
At last at rest.

If one could read the volume written
In furrowed lines of care;

If one could learn the secrets hidden
By frosted hair ;

How much that 's wrong might thus be
righted —

How much might be made plain ;
Alas ! to us, so narrow sighted,
God's ways seem vain !

PADRE KINO.

As read in old monastic lore,
So runs the legend of traditions,
Two hundred years ago, and more,
Along Pimeria's arid shore,
Were seen an hundred white-walled missions.

Throughout the drear and desert lands,
Where roamed fierce tribes intent on pillage,
From Blanca's snows to Gila's sands,
Transformed by consecrated hands,
Bloomed fertile fields with careful tillage.

And where the iridescent morn
Once lit the waste with tinted lustres,
Amalthea filled her fabled horn
From meadows rank with tasseled corn,
And hillsides flushed with purple clusters.

The subtle skill which deftly tilled
The barren dunes and sterile places,
By power assumed and pledge fulfilled,
And timely word and deed, instilled
In savage breasts the Christian graces.

The mission bells betimes invite
To prayer, and praise, and prompt confession ;
With awe the humble neophyte,
On bended knees, each morn and night,
Tells o'er his beads in deep contrition.

No Cortez, with his lances keen,
On conquest bent has hither drifted ;
Only a sandaled monk is seen,
With patient grace and prudent mien,
And sacred symbol high uplifted.

Inspired to found a new crusade,
With fervent faith and fixed devotion,
From Salamanca's cloistered shade,

In mail of righteousness arrayed,
The Padre Kino crossed the ocean.

Within that sanctified retreat,
Absorbed in holy meditations,
While kneeling at Immanuel's feet,
He heard the voice Divine repeat,
"Go preach my gospel to all nations."

The sainted hero's race is run ;
We read with tears the touching story,
Of how, by daily penance done,
And Christian faith and works, he won
At last the martyr's crown of glory.

The years, with their remorseless hands,
Have ground to dust the white-walled mis-
sions ;
And, in the place of fruitful lands,
Have left us but the drifting sands,
The broken shrines, the old traditions.

SUTTER'S FORT.

I stood by the old fort's crumbling wall,
On the eastern verge of the town ;
The sun through clefts in the ruined hall,
Flecked with its light the rafters brown,

And, sifting with gold the oaken floor,
Seemed to burnish the place anew ;
While out and in, through the half-closed door,
Building their nests, the swallows flew.

Charmed by the magic spell of the place,
The present vanished, the past returned,
While rampart and fortress filled the space,
And yonder the Indian camp-fires burned.

I heard the sentinel's measured tread,
The challenge prompt, the quick reply;

I saw on the tower, above my head,
The Mexican banner flaunt the sky.

Around me were waifs from every clime,
Blown by the fickle winds of chance ;
Knight-errants, ready, at any time,
For any cause, to couch a lance.

The staunch old captain, with courtly grace,
Owner of countless leagues of land,
Benignly governs the motley race,
Dispensing favors with open hand.

His long-horned herds on the wild oats feed, .
While brown *vaqueros*, with careless rein,
Swinging *reatas*, at headlong speed
Are dashing madly over the plain.

Only a moment the vision came ;
Where tower and rampart stood before,
Where flushed the night with the camp's red
flame,
Dust and ashes, and nothing more.

Borne to my ear on the ambient air,
Mingled with sounds of childish glee,
I heard again the low hum of care,
Like the restless moan of the sea.

IN THE SIERRAS.

THE rocks loom o'er the tranquil vale,
Like ruins vast and hoary ;
Each gray old turret has its tale,
Each seam and scar its story.

A hundred centuries have penned,
Upon those time-stained pages,
A secret lore, that is not kenned
By wisest seers and sages.

The fire, the frost, perchance the storms
Of some primeval ocean,
Have worn and torn these ragged forms,
This petrified commotion.

The years have softened all the scene,
The winds have sown the grasses ;

And sun and rain have clothed with green
The naked slopes and passes.

Here, on the granite crags, I lie,
Lulled by the wind's low wailing ;
And watch against the distant sky
The eagle slowly sailing.

The silver moon, with mellow ray,
Across yon spur is drifting ;
The roseate tints of dying day
Along the west are shifting.

The gray mist gathers in the gorge,
Where bright cascades are flowing ;
While, like the gleam of lighted forge,
The snow-crowned peaks are glowing.

Rare pictures, born of sun and shade,
Come with the evening shadows ;
Night nestles in the silent glade,
And veils the emerald meadows.

Above, the moaning pine trees stand;
Below, the shining river;
Uncovered, in this temple grand,
I worship God, the Giver.

STIRLING, THE OUTLAW.

STIRLING, the outlaw, grim and gray,
Fierce as a hunted stag at bay,

Had made his haunts where eagles nest,
Amid the crags on Shasta's crest.

The legends, told of his lawless life,
Revealed the cause of his hate and strife.

There were wrongs in the past 't was said,
Some one dishonored and some one dead ;

A home deserted, an honest name
Blasted and blackened by some one's shame.

Thus, fierce as a hunted stag at bay,
An outlaw was Stirling, grim and gray,

Banished to rocky cave and glen,
Shunned and feared by his fellow-men.

Manifold tales, at times, were told,
Suggesting Robin Hood of old :

Of lawless zeal evinced to guard
From fraud and wrong the orphan-ward ;

Of widow's needs, when sorely tried,
Somehow in doubtful ways supplied ;

Of tribute laid on sordid wealth,
And left at poor men's doors by stealth.

We know he held the laws in scorn,
And so it chanced, one summer morn,

Behind the bars in fetters — lay
Stirling, the outlaw, grim and gray.

On the wings of the wind, the news came down
From the highland camp to the lowland town ;

And leading her child, a woman came, —
With lips compressed and with eyes aflame, —

Over whose Magdalen face intense
Had swept the pallor of penitence.

“You deemed your father dead,” said she.

“Yes, dead to me, but not to thee.

“The chains are his, the guilt is mine,
The consolation, child, be thine.”

Through gloomy vaults, with fearless tread,
The maiden followed, the keeper led

Past bolts and bars, where Stirling lay
In sullen silence, grim and gray.

The hate and doubt could not withstand
The one sweet word, the outstretched hand.

A startled look of grave surprise
Dispelled the fierceness from his eyes.

As if some drowning wretch, at last,
Clutched at a hope that floated past.

Forgetting all his pride and pain,
The tears ran down his face like rain.

A glory filled the dungeon dim,
Since this sweet angel came to him.

'T is thus, by loving word and deed,
We heal the bruised wounds that bleed.

Thus let the charity within
Cover the nakedness of sin.

And ever thus may gentle hand
Pilot the shipwrecked soul to land.

EL VAQUERO.

TINGED with the blood of Aztec lands,
Sphinx-like, the tawny herdsman stands,
A coiled *reata* in his hands.
Devoid of hope, devoid of fear,
Half brigand, and half cavalier, —
This helot, with imperial grace,
Wears ever on his tawny face
A sad, defiant look of pain.
Left by the fierce iconoclast
A living fragment of the past, —
Greek of the Greeks he must remain.

LONG TOM.

PASSING to-day on the crowded street,
A character quaint I chanced to meet,
Dressed in an obsolete, primitive way, —
Erewhile the mode, but just now not *au fait*, —
By a bundle of blankets freighted down,
Ill at ease in the ways of the town,
Vacantly looking at this and that
Under the rim of his limpsy hat ;
Bent of body and shaky of limb,
Grizzled of locks, and gaunt and grim,
A wistful look in his filmy eye,
Purposeless, hopeless sauntering by.

This singular somebody, I opine,
Is an antique fossil of Forty-nine ;
Albeit a taciturn man he seems,
His babble will flow like the mountain streams,

If you simply suggest a social smile ;
He takes whiskey straight, remarking mean-
while,
That he finds since he had the rheumatiz,
That it don't do to take water in his.
Then follow, perforce, the trail of his talk,
It leads over somewhere to some North Fork,
Thence up the river to So-and-so's Bar,
And he will tell you that "thar was whar,"
Just under the grass-roots, one day he found
Pockets of nuggets and dust by the pound.

Events are the milestones which mark time's
lapse,
Whereby he recounts his haps and mishaps.
'T was the summer that Texas Bill was drowned,
Or the gulch whar the ten-pound lump was
found,
Or the day when Page & Bacon busted,
Or the time when Dave got up and dusted.
The year of the Frazier River stampede —
The dogondest humbug he ever seed.

He's only waiting to make his pile, —
In coal-oil parlance they say "strike ile," —
And then he'll go back to the States, you bet,
And see the old gal and the chicks; and yet,
He has n't heard for many a year
From Sal and the babies; 't is somewhat queer,
But then he reckons the times is tight,
And Sal never was much on the write.
Poor driveler! 't is years since Sal was laid
In dreamless sleep 'neath the willows' shade,
And your babies must men and women be,
Drifting about on the open sea.
Better go down in the stormy strife,
Than strand on the reefs of a useless life.

THE BUTTERFLY.

SEE, where the tortuous torrent glides,
Amid the leaves a pansy hides.

I stoop to pluck it there,

And lo, it swings,

On living wings,

Above me in the air.

Alas! this oriental bloom
Is but the pretense of perfume,
A moth tricked out for masquerade,
In gold and purple robes arrayed.
A chrysalis would be a flower,
And breaks its filmy thralls;
Then on its flaunting wings it flies
One little hour;
And when it dies,
An oscillating spangle falls.

THE HUMMING-BIRD.

In gold, and green, and purple sheen,
A wingéd meteor is seen.
With sharp, prismatic flash of light,
It shoots athwart the startled sight;
Plays on the lilac's purple bloom,
With drone of wing, and glint of plume;
Then on the calyx of the rose
An emerald gleams, a ruby glows;
A moment here, a moment there,
A moment poises in the air;
And then, across the open space,
The gem incarnate darts apace.

ENIGMA.

AFTER THE GERMAN.

A YOUTH, once walking in the early dawn,
Espied a red rose blushing on the lawn.

Its simple beauty caught his fickle sight,
Its subtile perfume filled him with delight.

With eager, selfish haste, that self-same morn,
He plucked the rose, unmindful of the thorn.

Alas, alack-a-day ! his joy has fled :
Only the thorn remains ; the rose is dead.

THE HEART WILL PINE.

ABU HÂRIRI — world renowned —
Tells how a starving Arab found
A diamond, lying on the ground.

“Oh, if this shining stone, instead,
Were but a single date,” he said,
“A cruse of oil, a crust of bread !”

The rarest jewels of the mine
Upon the heaving breast may shine,
And yet the hungry heart will pine.

ALLEGORY.

SWEET Floribel,
I fain would tell
What once befell
Our neighbor's starling, on a time :
Fed by a tender hand, it hung
Upon a gilded perch, and sung,
Until, alas ! one hapless day,
Lured by a bird-note from the lime,
In wantonness it flew away.

Somewhere the fowler's snare is spread ;
Unwary feet are sure to trip ;
Forbidden fruits are sweet, 't is said,
Yet turn to ashes on the lip.

Some fleeting, evanescent hours —
Amid the birds, amid the flowers —

Two silken wings were plumed with pride ;
Then came the bitter night,
And ere the morning light
Our birdling drooped and died.

HULDA.

IN a castle built of stone
Hulda sits and sighs alone.

Since her ill-starred natal day
Forty years have passed away.

Suitors had she by the score,
In the palmy days of yore.

Belted knights of high degree
Came to woo on bended knee.

High she held her stately head ;
“ I will wed a Prince,” she said.

Homeward rode the knights forlorn,
As she turned from them in scorn.

But the Prince came nevermore,
In the palmy days of yore.

So she sits and sighs alone
In a castle built of stone.

LET THEM DREAM.

FROM THE GERMAN.

I AND the ghost of midnight, side by side,
Stalk up and down these silent streets at will ;
How short a time since here men laughed and
cried —

One little hour ago, now all is still.
Erewhile joy vanished like a cast-off flower.

The empty goblet lies beside the stream,
Pale sorrow hid away at twilight hour ;
The world is tired, so let it, let it dream.

My hate has ceased, my wrath has taken flight,
As when at eve the storm-clouds break
awhile,
The peaceful moon looks down with tender
light,
And gilds the withered roses with her smile.

I walk these silent streets with bated breath,
I hold communion with myself. It seems
My soul would almost search the realm of death
To solve the mystery of human dreams.

My shadow trails behind me like a thief —
Before the gloomy prison bars I stand —
Thy faithful son, in bitter, bitter grief,
Atones his love for thee, O Fatherland !
He sleeps and dreams — what chains can bind
him now? —

Dreams of a hamlet by the wooded stream ;
Dreams that the victor's crown is on his brow.
O God of justice, let the captive dream !

Before me towers the lofty castle keep ;
Between the purple curtains I can see
The startled Cæsar clutch his sword in sleep,
And shudder as he dreams of treachery.
He mutters to himself, and shrinks with fright ;
His pallid face is plowed with many a seam ;
A thousand steeds are saddled for his flight.
O God of vengeance, let the despot dream !

The cottage by the brook, how small it seems!
Yet want and worth together share one bed.
The Lord will let his vassal dream his dreams—
Such fancies serve to calm his waking dread.
When slumber's silken meshes are unfurled
He sees his ample cornfields' golden gleam,
His narrow homestead widens to a world.
O God of mercy, let the poor man dream!

In yonder house, upon a bench of stone,
A blessing will I crave, and rest from care;
I love thee well, my child, though not alone—
My heart with Freedom you must ever share.
You dream of turtle-doves and butterflies,
While I can only hear the eagle's scream;
Can only see my war-steed's flashing eyes.
O God, I pray thee, let my darling dream!

O stars, that from the clouds like fortune break!
O night, that folds us in thy soft embrace!
Let not the sleeping world too soon awake
To gaze upon my grief-disfigured face.

Not yet can baffled Liberty afford
 To light her camp-fires by the day's broad
 beam,
Lest Tyranny again should whet her sword !
 O God of slumber, let the sleepers dream.

A REVERIE.

I.

TURN back with me across the dim historic
years,
And pass the portals of the dark, mysterious
door
Where pale-faced Sorrow sits beside the cairn
in tears,
Behold, the spectre of Imperial lust appears, —
Its fleshless hands are red with human gore.

II.

Around this sombre silhouette softly plays
The mellow lustre of Castilian days.

On the long, low swell of the sleeping sea,
At anchor a galleon swings at her chain.

On the strand a knight, on his bended knee, —
In the sovereign name of Catholic Spain, —
Unfurls a standard loyally.

Scarred veterans of elder lands,
Their banners red, and red their hands,
File rank on rank across the sands.
So fair a sight was never seen;
Broad valleys, bound in gold and green,
While stately rivers sweep between.

III.

The pageant vanishes; and in its place,
A band of friars, in procession, climb
-- The consecrated hill, with solemn face,
And plant the emblem of their faith sublime.
Where now they kneel upon the roofless sod,
Anon in minster walls they worship God.
Adown the summer silence I can hear
The silver chime of bells ring sweet and clear;
I see the vaulted nave, the surpliced priest,
The wine, the wafer, and the solemn feast,
The altar and the silvern candlesticks,

The carven Christ, the gilded crucifix,
The cups of beaten gold for sacred rites,
The smoking censer, and the waxen lights,
The sculptured saints, the dusky neophytes.

IV.

Time slowly weaves the web of fate,
Dynasties rise and fall :
And surely, soon or late,
Death comes to all.
Alike, beneath the sable pall,
The monarch and the monk lie down.
And so, his work of love and faith complete,
We see the good man calmly meet
The angel with the golden crown.

And while, methinks, I hear their sweet re-
frains

On every ripple of the ambient air,
The grass is growing in their fallen fanes,
Their silver chimes no longer call to prayer.

v.

'T is an o'er true tale, in the young New World,
Since that belted knight his banner unfurled,
His cross in the air, his keel on the main —
There 's strife on the sea and toil on the plain,
For the white man's blood is the red man's
bane.

Bronze statues of the mystic past,
I mark your slowly wasting lines,
Too crude in civic chains to last —
For you no promised morrow shines ;
Yielding to Time's corroding rust,
Victims of lawlessness and lust,
The end is certain, "dust to dust."

vi.

The years glide onward with noiseless feet,
And the mystical seasons wax and wane,
Only prolonged by the summer's heat,
Only defined by the winter's rain.

Before me stretches a pastoral land,
Where the patriarch pitches his tent by the
rills;
His corn land and vine land on either hand,
And his flocks and his herds on a hundred
hills.

When the hampers are filled with the fruits of
the vine,
And the sheaves of the reaper are garnered
in,
Red from the wine-press flow rivers of wine,
And the feasts of the autumn begin.

The young men laugh loud at their festive
games,
And the old men rejoice at the sight;
While the dark-eyed daughters of dark-browed
dames
Sing plaintive songs in the dusk of the
night.

O nights of rest, O days of ease,
In this the Garden of Hesperides !
Here life was one long summer day.
A day that never reaches noon —
Where smiling May is always May,
And roses bloom from June till June.

THE DEATH OF AL HÂRITH.

AL HAMADÂNI, wonder of his time,
Relates how Hârith, blessed with goodly store,
The owner of a hundred steeds and more,
Grown overwise and restless, in his prime
Set sail upon the desert seas of yore.
From Irak to Damascus, bold of wing,
He braves the tongue of flame, the simoon's
blast ;

Backward the iron hoofs of his coursers fling
The dust of travel, till he stands at last
Beside the blessed gate of Illah, where
The shining city sits beneath the palms.
His face toward Mecca first, he bows in prayer,
As all good Moslems should, bestows his alms,
And then betakes him to the bath ; then pays
His service to the Kadi, to express
With due decorum all the grave excess

Of oriental greeting : length of days,
Increase of store, — for thus, in Eastern lands,
With gracious speech, the Moslem greets his
guest.

And so the son of Irak folds his hands,
And sits him down by Syrian streams to rest.
To oriental ears no sound so sweet
As sound of running waters ; while he makes
The pilgrimage of life in dust and heat,
He fondly hopes, whene'er his soul awakes
In Paradise, to realize his dreams
Of singing bulbuls and of babbling streams.

Damascus, gold within and grime without ;
With here and there a narrow, tortuous street,
Through which the living tides flow in and out.
We catch a glimpse of palms above the walls,
And in the transient hush of hurrying feet,
We hear the tinkling tones of waterfalls.
Within the portals, sheltered from the heat,
When sultry days succeed to lustrous dawns,
Are cool arcades where shining waters run,

And tessellated courts, and terraced lawns,
And marble fountains flashing in the sun.
'T was much the same a thousand years ago.
The dreamy Moslem life pulsed to and fro
In the same sensual round, when Hârith found
Its mosques and market places crescent-
crowned.

A mart of splendor by a sea of sand,
Her khans were filled with wares from every
land :

Spices and gums, frankincense, musk, and
myrrh,

Amber and coral from the Indian seas ;
Brocades and arabesques from Nishampur,
Inwrought with gold and silver filigrees ;
Embroidered silks and satins, rare perfumes,
Rubies from Ava, pearls from Hindostan ;
Cambrics and tapestries from Persian looms,
Caftans from Fez, and shawls from Khorasan.
Rivers of wine and oil ran down her streets,
While, tossed and travel-stained, the desert
fleets,

With freights from Egypt, Khiva, and Cathay,
Beside her sacred gates at anchor lay.

Hot is the heart of youth ; what wonder, then,
As in his veins the 'streams of molten lava leap,
That he of Irak should, like other men,
Forget the words of wisdom, and despite
The warnings of the Prophet fall asleep
In some forbidden palace of delight ?
Meanwhile the moons of Syria waxed and
waned ;

And he, enchanted first, and then enchained,
A willing slave in silken meshes lay,
Where broad-browed nymphs with sombrous
waves of hair,
And lustrous eyes that shunned the light of
day,

Like Venus veiled in phantom robes of spray,
Were idly swaying in the perfumed air. .
Change follows change in all material things ;
The dawn gives place to day, the day to night ;
Our treasures, as the Prophet says, have wings,

And like the mists of morning take their flight.

Love tires of its delicious pain, and power

Is but the fleeting phantom of an hour.

Perhaps the still small voice, by night, was

heard,

Which comes to us unbidden and unsought ;

Perhaps the ghost of loves forsaken, stirred

Once more the turbid current of his thought.

If vows were made, or expiation done,

The text does not disclose, nor can we tell.

But this we know, he broke the Circean spell,

And swore by Allah that the morrow's sun

Should see him on his way : and when the dawn

With rosy fingers had in part withdrawn

The mantle of the night, he stole away,

Leaving the dancers at their revels still,

And with his camel drivers waited, till

The earth unveiled before the full-orbed day.

Beyond the gates, beside the sacred well,

In abject squalor on his leathern mat,

Abu Ben Zayd, the prince of beggars, sat,

And told his wondrous tales, and sought to sell

His amulets : " This, from the holy shrine,
 Will guard thee, son of Islam, from thy foes ;
 And this, — peace be with thee and thine, —
 Will comfort thy distress and soothe thy woes ;
 And this, — if thou should'st chance to go as-
 tray, —

Will lead thee safely back." " Upon my word,"
 Al Hârith said, " I do believe
 Thou liest ; and, as the spider weaves his web
 for prey,

So thou dost weave these pretexts to deceive."
 The Prophet in the seventh heaven heard
 The impious scoff, the dervish bowed his head :
 " Illah il' Allah ! " God is great, he said.

A steel-blue sky above, and on either hand,
 As far as the eye can reach, a sea of sand.
 In all of the great white space no sound nor
 sight ;
 Only the glare of day, only the hush of night.
 Curses have followed like wolves, as they march
 Day after day, under the arch

Of the pitiless sky ; no joy and no rest,
For omens are thick in the thin white air ;
And the camel-drivers forget to jest
When Fear looks into the face of Care.
In the door of his tent Al Hârith sits,
And his face wears a troubled look, for lo !
On the rim of the desert a shadow flits,
And it seems like the cloud of the coming foe.

He hears their hoof-beats nearer and more
near ;
No hope in flight ; and, paralyzed with fear,
He calls on Allah, but he calls in vain ;
Across the wide expanse of arid plain
Full half a hundred horsemen dash ;
And, foremost where the circling sabres flash,
Behold ! the face of him who sought to sell
The amulets beside the sacred well.

Ten centuries attest the force of this
One sabre stroke.

In all the eastern lands

Abu Ben Zayd is held in high repute,
 Because he fixed the faith in amulets,
 And gave to every canting mendicant
 From Mecca to Stamboul this poor pretext
 To make a merchandise of piety.

The Prophet says: "Give ear, O sons of men!
 Obey the precepts of the faith, and then
 Accept the preordained decrees of fate.
 Illah il' Allah!" Only God is great.

DOM PERIGNON.

THE DISCOVERER OF CHAMPAGNE.

Crossing the purple hills of Epernay,
Hard by the little thorp of Haut Villier,
Just where the winding river blocks the way,
A gray old ruin you may chance to see —
Long since the famous Abbey of Saint Pierre,
But erst the castle keep of chivalry ;
Where broad-arched portals led to columned
courts

With terraces, and lawns, and blazoned halls,
And lists for jousts of arms, and manly sports,
While, pendent from its battlemented walls,
The oriflamme of France flashed on the sight.

Fresh from his conquests in the Holy Land,
His casque and corselet cast aside, the knight
Bent here above his lady's jeweled hand ;
And here, of old, did valiant men at arms

Their wassails and their drinking bouts pro-
long
From dark till dawn, — instead of war's alarms,
The gust of laughter and the gush of song.
Along these corridors their iron heels rang,
And here on festive nights, and tilting days,
His harp in hand, the wandering minstrel sang
His madrigals and tender roundelays ;
Here, too, the jester in his cap and bells,
With licensed leer, assailed pretense and
sham —
Played carte and tierce with mediæval swells,
And stabbed them with a well-turned epi-
gram.
But knight, and minstrel, and my lady fair,
Gave place to cowléd monks. Some one has
said : —
“The pen is mightier than the sword, and
prayer
More potent than the monarch's crownéd
head ;”
And so it seems, for, like a king of kings,

The priest became the potentate of France —
Held court, and crown, and state in leading
strings —

Made war and peace, yet never lifted lance.

Who could foretell the change that was to be
From rocky caves to grand cathedral aisles,
And from the manger to the Papal See?
Beneath the domes of consecrated piles,
A treasure trove has been preserved for us —
For music, marble, canvas could, in part,
Repeat the story of the Cross, and thus
The Church became the very shrine of art.

At first, the monk could worship in his cell
Without the ritual of form and cant,
The burning taper and the tinkling bell,
The swinging censer and the solemn chant.
He gave his life to prayer and holy thought ;
And when the enemy of souls enticed,
With scourge and fast, on bended knees, besought
The Virgin Mother, and the risen Christ.

Not so our brotherhood of jovial fame ;

They ate with toothsome zest the rich re-
past —

Were bacchanals in fact and monks in name,

And loved the feast much better than the
fast.

They cried : “ Give us this day our daily bread,”

Which meant fat capon for monastic greed ;

And then they gathered tithes, waxed fat, and
fed

The hinds on husks of faith and crumbs of
creed ;

But who will dare to say they were not wise

If, for themselves, they killed the fatted calf ?

Not I, at least, for I have learned that half

The fine-spun theories which men devise

Are only snares, in short, for catching flies.

The monastery lands were deftly tilled —

From year to year the Friars leased the soil,

Received therefor the lion's share, and filled

The Abbey bins with corn and wine and oil.

Dom Perignon, purveyor of the vaults,
With reputation reaching to our day —
Like Sancho Panza's uncles, so they say —
Could tell at once the virtues and the faults
Of every drop of wine produced, and knew
The kinds of grape, the hillsides where they
grew,
The modicum of sun and rain and dew,
With just the proper mixing to impart
The flavor which the epicures require.
His brain, perhaps, was sluggish, but his heart
Was like his wine, full of imprisoned fire.
Who knows the fermentation of desire,
Which fumed and fretted day and night, un-
seen,
Beneath the friar's unkempt gabardine?

Some golden years gone by, ere youth had
flown,
And ere youth's oaten follies had been sown
In that gay capital of La belle France,
It was my wont, at times, to stroll about

The haunts where madcap-students sing and
shout,

And where with gay *grisettes* they dance.

In an old *café* by the sluggish Seine,

Two close converging streets between,

Where these wild roisterers oft did congregate,

His portrait hangs, or there it hung of late.

In half a dozen dashes of the pen

I'll try to sketch the likeness of the man —

That is, I'll do the best I can.

And if I fail, why then, what then?

With some small share of tact and less of art,

And more of that old Saxon gift called knack,

As in charades, I'll improvise a part,

And dress it from my store of *bric-a-brac*.

And first, the part most prominent, in fine,

I'll take this Arab wine-skin filled with wine,

And hang it here upon the smoky wall

Above these Roman sandals; over all

I'll drape this friar's frowsy gown, .

And last, this masker's face — a full-orbed
moon —

And the sketch is done, from the shaven
crown
To the soles of the sandal-shoon.

Now, I'll be bound, you thought of course to
see

Some thin ascetic saint on prayers intent,
And not this cōunterfeit of piety.

Small doubt, indeed, but he must needs re-
pent —

In fact, but for his priestly robe, I fear

He would be deemed an arrant sinner,
Far less concerned about his vows austere

Than for the flavor of his dinner.

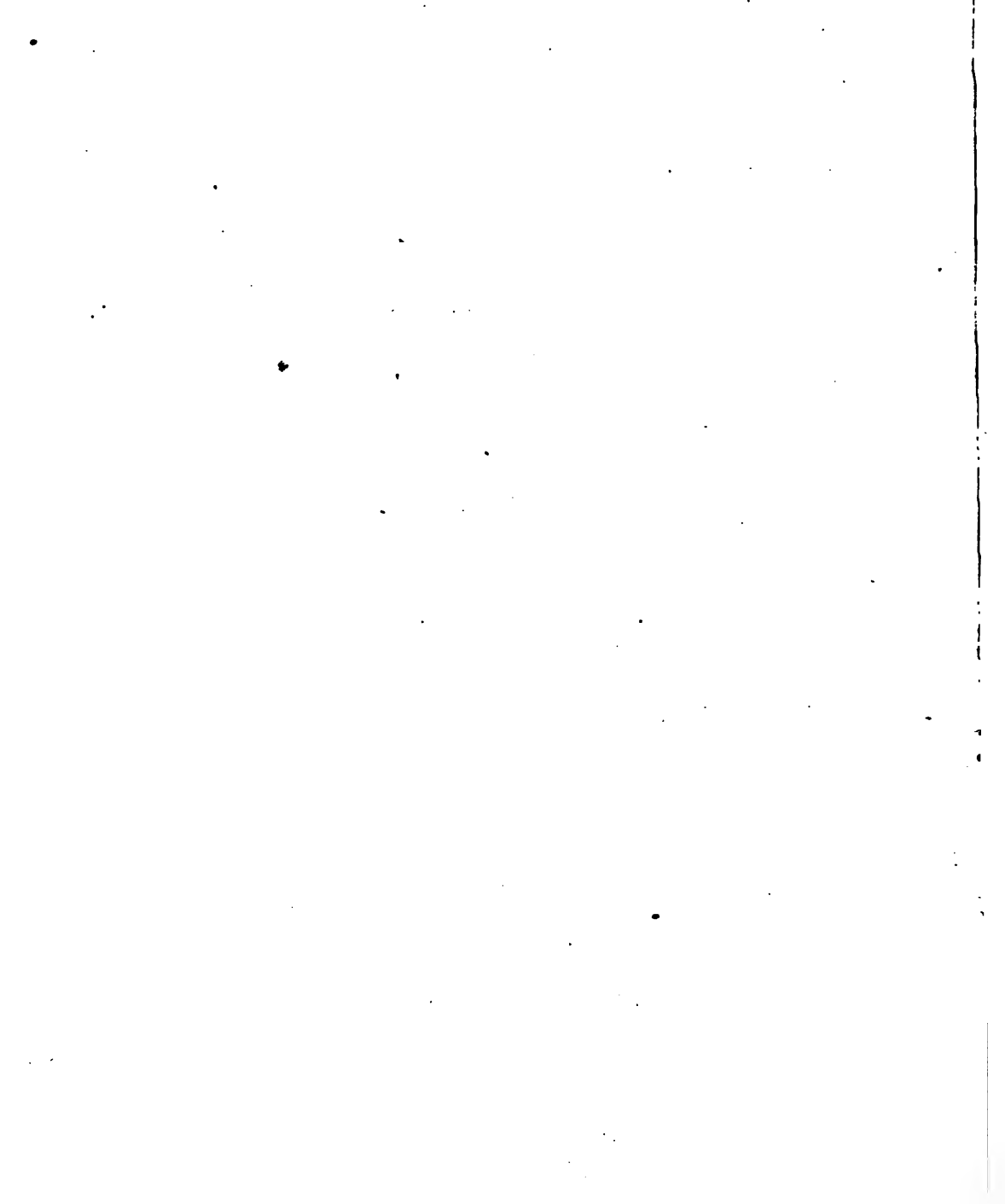
But then, all men are prone to sin, you know,
And monks, at best, are only men, and so
They wrap themselves in sackcloth, while they
line

Their ample gowns with capon and with wine.
Concede, that to the priestly robe there clings
An odor of sanctity, if you will,

We find that an angel without his wings
Is only a mortal in dishabille.
A truce to dull polemics. You will see,
That not by constant prayer and self-restraint
Did Padre Perignon become the saint
Of social Sybarites, like you and me.
But thus it came to pass, one day
A cask of vapid Epernay, —
Which he, betimes, had fortified
With syrup and with *eau-de-vie*, —
Made mad with effervescing pride,
Burst its frail bonds exultingly.
Some drops fell on the friar's lips,
His hand into the flood he dips,
And lo, a miracle ! He sips
The drink divine, with wonder quaffs
A living wine that leaps and laughs.
Pale, phosphorescent spark, that lights
A sensuous flame refined and rare —
All hail, O Monk ! thy neophytes
Are demigods — or think they are.

Look to thy laurels, Bacchus! crown anew
Thy cups with garlands! for thy wine has
caught
A rarer spirit, and a richer hue,
From this fat friar's accidental thought.

We shed no hackneyed, ill-timed tears
Upon an old monastic tomb,
But pour libations on a shrine.
His name from out the cloistered gloom,
Borne on the tossing tide of wine,
Drifts down the cycle of the years.
Amid the salvos of the feast,
Let all good bacchanals, at least,
In silence toast the jocund priest.



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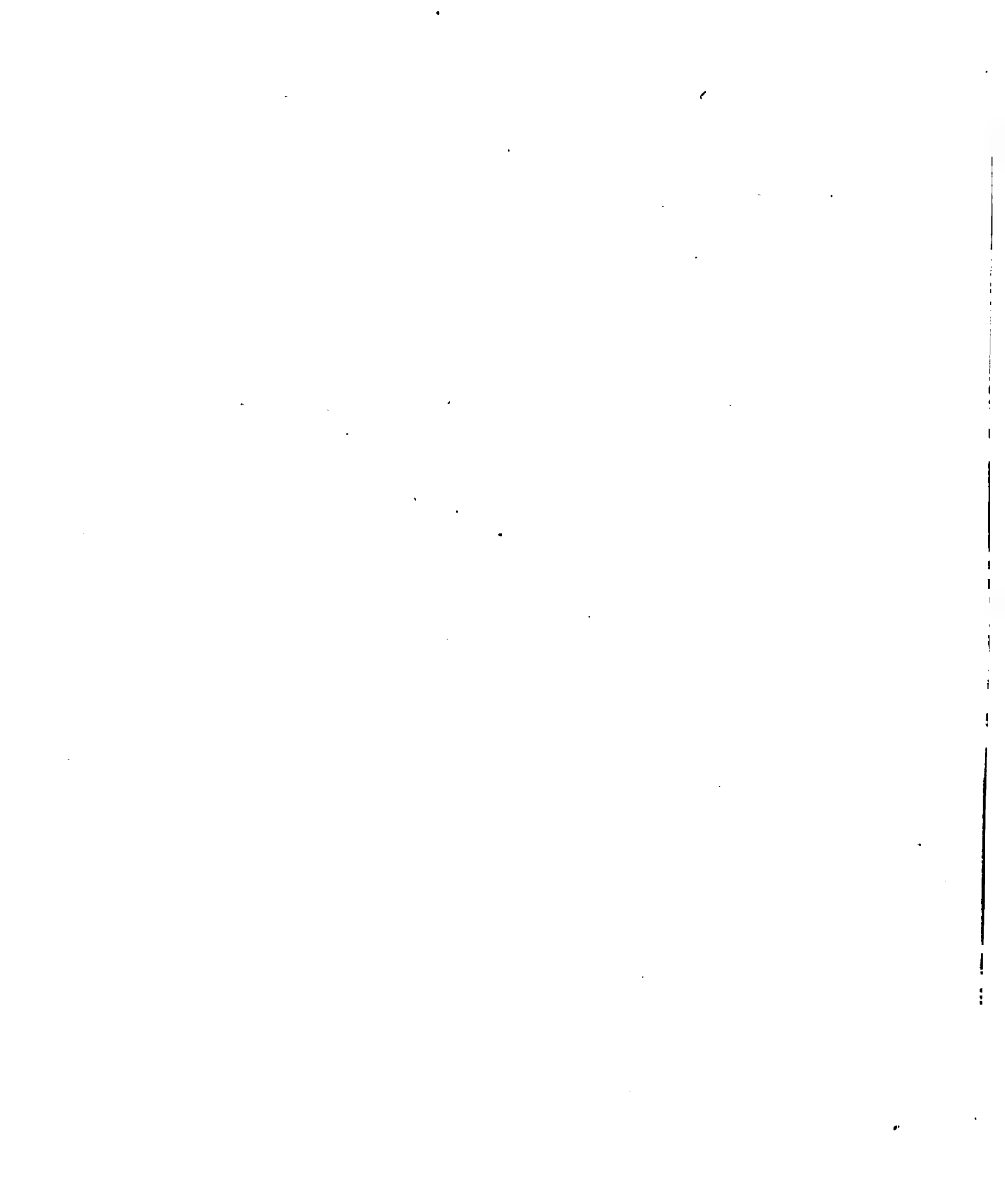
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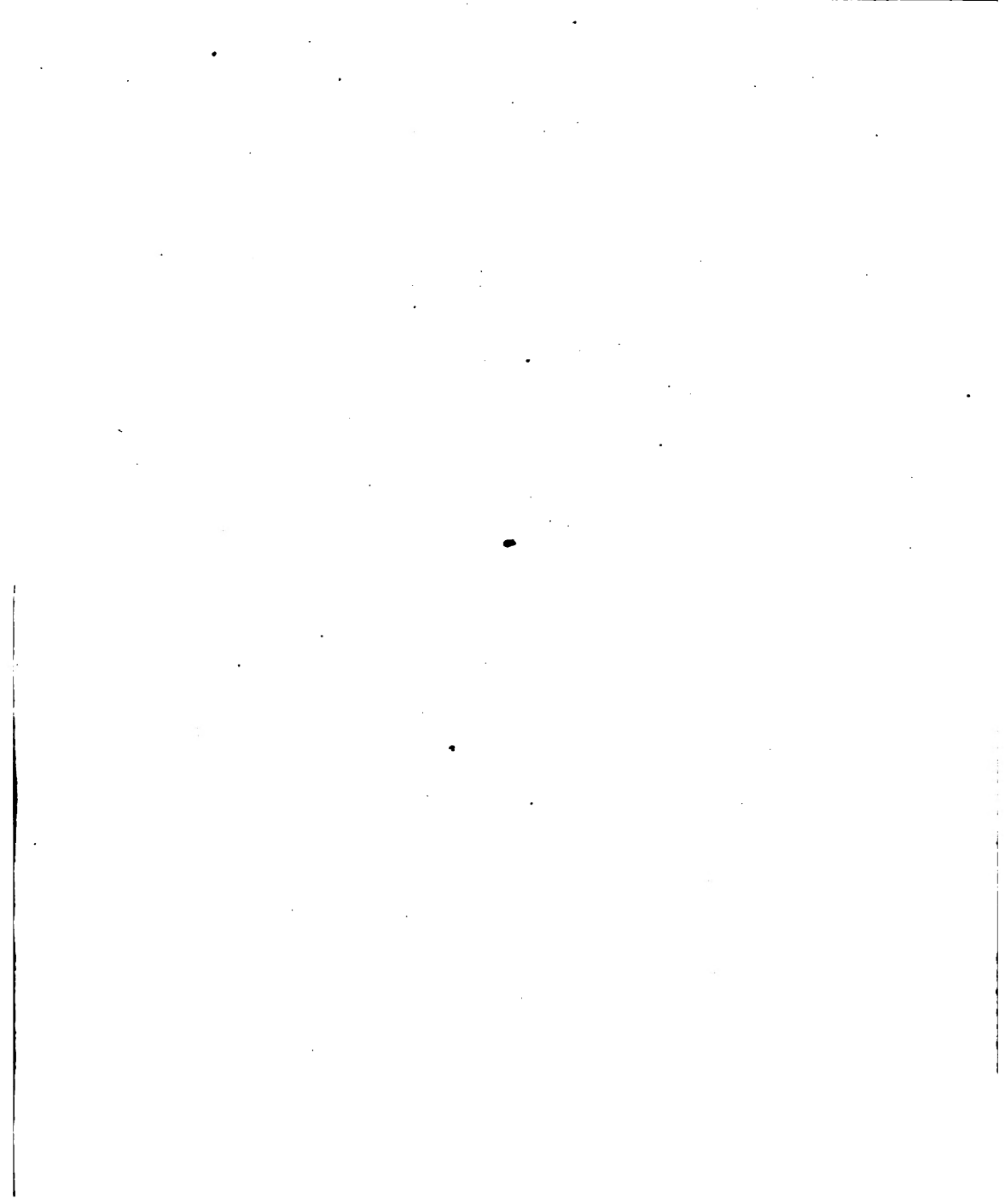
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